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The Rise and Fall of Emma Hamilton

(bakalářská práce)

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Obsah práce

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Emma's Early Life and Family.....	6
2. 1. Birth.....	6
2. 2. Chester life (1765 – 1777).....	7
2. 3. Life in London.....	8
2. 3. 1. Arrival and servant work.....	8
2. 3. 2. Making money in the streets.....	8
2. 3. 3. Life at Up Park and Edgware Row.....	10
2. 3. 4. Bargain and results.....	11
2. 4. Life in Naples.....	13
2. 4. 1. Getting educated.....	13
2. 4. 2. Marriage.....	13
2. 4. 3. Lady Hamilton's role.....	14
3. Life of Nelson.....	16
3. 1. Early youth of Nelson.....	16
3. 2. Nicaragua.....	18
3. 3. Albemarle and France.....	19
3. 4. Boreas and Navigation Act.....	20
3. 5. Marriage.....	21
3. 6. Agamemnon.....	22
4. Nelson becoming the hero of Naples.....	22
4. 1. Corsica.....	23
4. 2. Ca Ira.....	24
4. 3. Position of Spain, Cape St. Vincent.....	24
4. 4. Lady Hamilton's share.....	25
4. 5. Theseus.....	26
4. 6. Return to Naples.....	28
4. 7. Battle of Nile and Emma's help.....	29
5. Nelson and Emma, Britain and Naples.....	33
5. 1. Naples at war.....	33
5. 2. Shadow of death and going to Palermo.....	35

5. 3. Life in Palermo	36
5. 4. Parthenopean Republic	37
5. 5. Inseparable couple	41
5. 6. Back in England.....	43
5. 7. Trafalgar and the consequences	45
6. Conclusion	47

1. Introduction

„ It seemed to everyone that Emma had the power. Sir William, Lady Hamilton and myself, are the main springs of the machine, which manages what is going on in this country”¹ As this quote suggests, and I agree, Sir William Hamilton and Admiral Nelson had a great influence on the events in The Kingdom of Naples. But as the well-known saying suggests, behind every great man there is a great woman. Emma being a wife to an important politician, a very close friend to the Queen of Naples and a lover and best friend to one of the most important admirals in the history of British warfare, might have been the great woman behind all of the deeds of the men surrounding her life.

In this thesis, you are going to read about Emma’s early life, her succession to the high society, happiest days of her life filled with love and her miserable death among sick and poor. I am going to study her life and find out her importance for the development of historical events during the period of Emma’s stay in The Kingdom of Naples.

Just like Madame de Pompadour, she too came from a relatively poor family and thanks to powerful men she reached a much better life than she had ever anticipated. But there still is a difference between the two women. Madame de Pompadour affected the history directly by her interventions in politics. Many French people also despised her for some of the actions by which she negatively influenced their lives.

On the other hand Lady Hamilton’s influence was very indirect. She never actually got any political status. Since she was said to be the most beautiful and friendly woman of all, she had the power to positively influence the men around her. And she was even loved by many for doing so.

¹ Kate Williams, *England’s Mistress: The Infamous Life of Emma Hamilton* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006) 225.

2. Emma's Early Life and Family

2. 1. Birth

Lady Hamilton was born Amy Lyon in the slums of Northwest of England on Friday 26th April 1765 in the city of Nesse. Nowadays, Nesse is a luxurious village, back then it was a village that lived on profits from a local coalmine. Emma's mother, Mary Kidd, came to Nesse from Hawarden in 1764 to help her sister-in-law with her newborn baby. Since Nesse was a labour village, it was full of men and therefore every woman that came to the city was immediately noticed and worshiped.

Less than two months after Mary's arrival, she announced her marriage to Henry Lyon. It was a slightly unusual age for a woman to get married, but they might have been forced by an unplanned pregnancy. Both lovers were illiterate and signed their bond with crosses. Emma's official birth date was set on 26th April 1765 in order to emphasize her legitimacy, but we do not know for sure the exact date of her birth. She was baptised on 12th May as Amy, but she always claimed that her correct name was Emma. Mary was very unhappy with her life and she considered little Emma to be yet another burden, because no relatives came to Nesse to assist her with the baby as the custom commanded. Despite tough beginnings, Emma's mother must have been a very remarkable woman, for she stayed with her daughter and supported her throughout various parts and careers of her life. When living with Emma in the Kingdom of Naples, according to E. Hallam Moorhouse², she was loved and known as "Signora Madre dell Ambasciatrice".

Henry died two months after Emma's baptism under very unclear circumstances. There is no cause of death recorded and Emma never talked much about her father.

² E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909).

Emma was always said to be an only child, but some evidence might suggest that she had a brother or a half-brother, Charles. Nevertheless, there are no more traces of him other than in one letter from Thomass Kidd. “I have to inform you that your brother Charles is in Greenwich College and has been there since the 6th inst.”³

2. 2. Chester life (1765 – 1777)

After Emma and Mary were free of their duties, they moved back with Mary’s family. Emma often claimed that her grandmother Sarah was the one who brought her up, but historically that was very unlikely, since she had a full time job as a cart woman. Amy was hungry for some attention and love. In this period of her life, people started to call her Emily, which was the name she used as a young adult.

Mary is said to have found a protector in John Glyn or Lord Halifax, but that was very improbable, because Mary was not a good material to marry or get involved with. A more probable theory, according to Kate Williams⁴ was that Mary was a lover of one of the high servants at Glyn house. After Sir John died, Mary went to London to follow her love and left Emma at Sarah’s house. Whether true or not, rumours about her father being a Lord raised her desire to become a member of the high society class. Nevertheless, Sarah could not afford to feed another hungry mouth and that’s why she sent Emma to be a servant at Dr. Honoratus Lee Thomas’s house in Hawarden. Emma despised the job and later in her life, she often idealized this part of her life as being a baby nurse. That was the time, when she decided that she did not want to end up as a servant’s wife. Not very long after she began to work at Thomas’s house, she had been dismissed and decided to move to London in the fall of 1777 to seek money, sensation and love.

³ Walter Sydney Sichel, *Memoirs of Emma, Lady Hamilton, the friend of Lord Nelson and the court of Naples* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Publishers, 1910).

⁴ Kate Williams, *England’s Mistress: The Infamous Life of Emma Hamilton* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006) Chapter 3.

2. 3. Life in London

2. 3. 1. Arrival and servant work

She did not have a problem with finding a job in London. Even though there were tons of new people coming to town every day, they were a fairly good and cheap work force. Emma started to work for Mrs. Richard Badd in Chatham Place. Despite her young age, she was already very beautiful and most of the mistresses would be jealous to employ her, but there were no young men in this house. Emma did not leave much evidence about this period of her life and she had never talked much about it, so the only source of information about this life period is the biography of Jane Powell, who was Emma's mate.

Working as a servant fuelled her ambitions to become famous and rich. She was really lucky to have Jane as her guide through the dangerous London streets and when Mrs. Badd fired Emma, she went straight to the Drury Lane Theatre in Covent Garden to go to try-outs. She was partly a very good adept, because she was young and beautiful with no parental guidance, but her voice was rough and she was really stubborn. Despite these facts she did get a job. Becoming a servant to Mrs. Linley, the wardrobe mistress, had brought her much closer to the theatre than she had been ever before. Mrs. Linley was very attached to her children and when her last son died, she became almost impossible to please. Emma found out that working in the theatre was not as easy as she had imagined. It was said that Emma was fired, because of deprivation from Mrs. Linley after her son's death, but it was probably because of the December cost cuts, which happened in most of the households around Christmas time.

2. 3. 2. Making money in the streets

Emma managed to stay clear of prostitution for nearly 18 months. It was very probable that she was a prostitute, but she also might have worked as a servant or a bar tender and made some additional money by selling her body,

since at that time it was common to think of prostitution as a safer way how to make money than working in a factory. Of course, most of the available sources do not talk much about this period of her life, because it was a very delicate matter that Emma did not like to discuss. By 1788, her fame had spread so far that prostitutes were imitating her and her moves.

Her beautiful skin and hair soon attracted the attention of local artists. It is not sure, which one of the famous portrait painters found her first, but her paintings by George Romney and Sir Joshua Reynolds became very famous. One of the first paintings is “The Death of Dido” by Reynolds from 1781, see attachment 1, on which is a girl that looks very much like Emma in an almost see through dress. The Prince of Wales later bought this painting. Emma is also said to be the model for one of Reynolds’s most famous paintings called “Thais” from the same year as the previous paintings, see attachment 2. When her picture was presented at the Royal Academy, it caused sensation and people demanded to know the identity of the model, but later on they called her only as Miss Emily. Nevertheless Romney had a greater influence on Emma’s life and accompanied her through one whole period of it. In 1791 she wrote a letter to George, in which she describes this period of her life “You was the first dear friend I opened my heart to. You have seen and discoursed with me on my poorer days. You have known me in my poverty. I own through distress, my virtue was vanquished.”⁵ Moorhouse uses similar words when quoting her letter to Romney. “Oh, my dear friend, for a time I own through distress my virtue was vanquished, but my sense of virtue was not overcome.”⁶

She is also said to have been a model at the Royal Academy of Art, for what there is no good explanation than a passion for art, because the pay for this job was not more than alms. Her body had also drawn attention of some other people. “... and it is constantly stated, though never definitely proved that a notorious quack doctor of the day, named Graham, engaged to her pose Hygeia in his meretricious ‘Temple of Health’.”⁷ This temple was a series of attractions, which were supposed to cure various health issues.

⁵ Kate Williams, *England’s Mistress: The Infamous Life of Emma Hamilton* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2006) Chapter 3.

⁶ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 9.

⁷ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 7.

2. 3. 3. Life at Up Park and Edgware Row

One man, although not important for the further course of Emma's life, but important at that time, had lifted her up from the poor parts of the city. She lived with Sir Harry Fetherstonehangh at Up Park in Sussex as his temporary mistress. The first child of Emma Hart, as she was calling herself at that time, was conceived there. But Sir Fetherstonehangh got fed up by Emma's thoughtless spending of his money and turned her adrift before she could give birth to her daughter. Emma did not take much interest in her first child.

A more important man who entered her life in this period was Charles Greville. When Sir Fetherstonehangh got quit of pregnant Emma, in despair she went back to Hawarden to her grandmother's house. After begging Harry to accept her back or provide her with some financial aid, in the end, she wrote to the Honourable Charles Greville. After exchanging a couple of letters full of emotions, Greville managed to persuade Emma to come live with him. Emma then decorated his house and his antique collections with her beauty and charm. Emma's mother lived with her ever since she moved to Greville's and later to Lord Hamilton's house. The years spent there were one of the happiest and most reckless. Although Greville tried with his whole heart to train Emma to be like him and Emma mentions it in one of her letters, he did not manage to repress the wild side of her. After living with Emma in Edgware Row for three years, he got fed up with her and began to understand Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh's previous actions.

Emma started to visit Romney more than ever before. His diaries contain almost three hundred records of Emma's sittings during those four years. In this period they even might have become more than friends. The relationship between Emma and Romney had been for some time a threat to Greville's idea of the future. Later on, the duress disappeared, because Emma started to take Romney more as her father or brother than her lover. Romney also adored Emma's beauty and intelligence. In this period of her life, she got very well educated in all the graces necessary to live in a high society.

2. 3. 4. Bargain and results

While living with Greville, Emma became to be known and talked about in letters as “the fair tea-maker of Edgware Row”. In August 1782 an event decisive for Emma’s further life occurred, even though she did not know yet that it would be important for her. The first Lady Hamilton died. As written in Nelson’s *Lady Hamilton*⁸ “The first Lady Hamilton is merely a shadow, a ghost, in the many-coloured story of her successor...” Emma first met Sir Hamilton in 1784. Even though Greville and Lord Hamilton were very different they shared one thing apart from their family bond and that was their taste in art as well as women. They both admired Emma’s beauty and even preferred her above all the antique gems they possessed. At the time they met, she was not 20 yet and Lord Hamilton was going on 55, but he was very young for his age and soon Emma lost the impression of him being very old.

When Greville came back from a holiday, he was very unsure about the future. Fuelled by some reasonable suggestions from his relatives, he started to make up a plan. He needed to marry an heiress to get enough money to keep up his lifestyle and at the same time prevent his uncle to re-marry in order to be the only suitable relative to inherit all his belongings after his death. In the end he did not manage any of those. It is sure that Greville never actually married. Nevertheless, his chances of a good marriage were very low with Emma by his side. He needed to get rid of her and therefore arranged a plan with his uncle. Emma was to be informed, that her dear Greville’s interests demanded a temporary separation. Emma would do anything at this stage to please her lover, so after some minor protests, she agreed to this plan not knowing that Greville had never intended to come to fetch her back home after a couple of months as he promised.

Emma’s departure was postponed a couple of times, because of various reasons, for example her mother’s disease. She also had herself painted as “Bacchante” with a dog, see attachment 3 (it is possible that originally it could have been a goat, which was later repainted). At the picture addressed to Sir

⁸ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 34.

Hamilton she is smiling very happily, because she was going through her best times, not knowing about the misery to come.

Emma and her mother arrived in Naples on 26th April, which was Emma's birthday. The first place they went to was the Palazzo Sessa, which was the Embassy at that time. There they met with Sir Hamilton, who arranged the accommodation in an apartment in the Bay of Naples for them. Lord Hamilton provided Emma with everything she and her mother needed, gave her gifts and Emma started to see the change in his attitude towards her. "She liked admiration; she had enjoyed the ambassador's delight in her beauty, when he was in London and Greville was at hand, but here in Naples alone it was not quite the same; he was less fatherly, more lover-like"⁹

Soon after her arrival, it was clear that she does not have a clue about the trap that has been set out for her. "For I feel more and more unhappy at being separated from you, and if my fatal ruin depends on seeing you, I will and must at the end of summer."¹⁰ Emma had sent Greville fourteen letters, before Lord Hamilton revealed the truth about the agreement of handing Emma from Greville to Hamilton. When Greville confirmed his uncle's words, Emma's world changed completely. "By this treatment he did more than any other man who came into her life to destroy the child in her—the simple uncritical belief in goodness which she had strongly, in spite of her own strayings from the path of virtue... She had learned her lesson: in the future she would be less the victim of men's passions and more the moulder of her own fortunes."¹¹

Despite this, we must admit that Greville at least somehow secured that Emma would be in good hands and would not suffer from lack of material possession. We may even think of it as a kind of favour he did to Emma and that his deeds had brought her to the best days of her life. "Under Greville's yoke she had been ready to hinch and slave; with Sir Hamilton she would rule."¹² Emma never forgot Greville and still thought of him during her fourteen years spent in Naples. She started to send him letters again in the late summer of

⁹ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 55-56.

¹⁰ Walter Sydney Sichel, *Memoirs of Emma, lady Hamilton, the friend of Lord Nelson and the court of Naples* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Publishers, 1910) 71.

¹¹ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton*. (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 62.

¹² Walter Sydney Sichel, *Memoirs of Emma, lady Hamilton, the friend of Lord Nelson and the court of Naples* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Publishers, 1910) 77.

1787, which were written similar to journal entries and provided a lot of information about the following events and her successful life in Naples.

2. 4. Life in Naples

2. 4. 1. Getting educated

Her calm life in Naples had offered a big opportunity for her to expand her natural characteristics and education. The first few years were full of joy and light-hearted fun like the concerts, balls and receptions. In the end of the year 1786, Emma and her mother left the apartment and moved into Palazzo Sessa. By this act, they had disturbed the calmness and for a while, Emma became one of the women who was most talked about in the Kingdom. Some believed that she was secretly married to Lord Hamilton, but other denied it, because if so, the Queen, Marie Carolina, would have already invited her to the Court. Lord Hamilton was known to fulfil all of Emma's wishes and desires, but marriage. Emma's character was deeply changed by the hole left in her heart after Greville's treason, but after less than a year, Emma became much attached to the old man and probably even started to love him in a way.

In this period of life, she also had a lot of time to sit for painters and she made a series of sketches called "Attitudes from Life". These series were not the only artistic piece made of Emma at that time. Lord Hamilton spent a lot of time and money to have her pictures painted and sculptures made. She had also educated herself very thoroughly in music and singing.

2. 4. 2. Marriage

When properly educated, she started to get more confident in the presence of powerful men. Emma started to want to become Lady Hamilton more than ever before. Her friend, tutor and adviser, Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Argyll, had a great influence on Lord Hamilton and in the end, her

powers combined with Emma's, convinced Hamilton to agree to the marriage. Unfortunately, Elizabeth could not live to see the achievement for she died in the end of 1790.¹³

Lord Hamilton and his wife-to-be had to travel to London before the wedding could take place. They were planning on staying in London for as short as possible and they managed to obtain the King's consent and to solve all other affairs necessary over the summer. They finally married on 6th September 1791 in Marylebone Church. During the time, when Lord Hamilton was doing business in London, Emma had plenty of time to sit for Romney again. One picture was painted on the day of her wedding – “Ambadress” with the Vesuvius behind her. See attachment 4. Romney was beginning to feel his illness at this time and seemingly was worried about the imagined coldness of Emma during the first sitting, but the next one was already as usual. These sittings were the last ones Emma ever made for Romney. After her arrival back to Caserta, she wrote him a note asking him to send one of the paintings and after he replied, Romney left out of her life for good.

2. 4. 3. Lady Hamilton's role

On their way back to Naples, the newly-weds stopped by in Paris and were received by Marie Antoinette. She surely wanted to meet the new ambadress, but she also needed them to deliver a letter to her sister Marie Carolina. At this point, Emma started to tend to dramatize events. She “saw herself and the Queen as the heroines of a drama”¹⁴

When back at Naples, life went on with no great change, except with the thought of the war stricken France and the threat of spreading the war onto them. The sun was shining and Lady Hamilton yet did not know that the twin strongholds she could see from her window, Uovo and Nuovo, would soon become centres of anarchy and rebellion.

¹³ Horace William Bleackley, *The Story of a Beautiful Duchess: Being an Account of the Life and Times of Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton & Argyll* (London: Adamant Media Corporation. 2004) 316.

¹⁴ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 65.

Meanwhile, Marie Carolina was watching events in Europe very closely, not only because of her sister being in danger. In the last letter to her, Marie Antoinette implies that the situation is getting out of control and she is afraid of her and her husband's, Louis XVI, life. Marie Carolina was more like their mother, Marie Theresa, more beautiful, more powerful and stronger. On the other hand, her husband Ferdinand was not very interested in politics or ruling the country. He took more interest in hunting and sports, so he left the ruling matters to his wife.

The Queen was afraid of her country because of the possibility of the French Revolution spreading throughout Europe and into the Kingdom of Two Sicilies. She felt that she needed to assure her country some powerful allies in the upcoming conflict and her best choice was Britain. The way to that country was of course through the Ambassador and who would be a better target than his wife, Emma. Right after the return from London, Emma was invited by the Queen to the Court. Later, Emma became not only her confidante, but also a friend. In Marie's eyes, Emma was both of the things, but also a powerful tool used in order to get the support of England.

The situation in Europe was getting worse every day. "The storm-cloud had burst in a flood that was to overwhelm not only the King and Queen of France, but many of the fairest and bravest of their subjects; and when the guillotine ceased its work, up rose a new curse to France in the person of Napoleon, whose marvellous military genius and overreaching ambition plunged Europe into one of the titanic struggles of history—a struggle in which nation battled against nation, madly, blindly, scarce seeing the cause of their strife and fury through the sword-blows and the deafening roar of the cannon, scarce realizing why to one side fell the dust of defeat, to the other the fumes of unjustifiable conquest."¹⁵

At the beginning of 1793, Louis XVI was executed together with his wife. The French Revolution was the fuel of the Great War, which then spread through Europe for more than twenty years.

In the times of fear, Marie Carolina and Emma became even closer. Marie Carolina found Emma's character the most refreshing among the other

¹⁵ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 106 – 107.

ladies of the Court. Emma had a great capacity for dealing with men and events, she was impulsive and capable of leadership and therefore she was made the Queen's co-worker and dear friend. Emma became really enthusiastic about Marie and loved her with her whole heart. She even started to love England more, just to please her beloved friend. Emma did her best to supply Marie with everything she needed and was able to provide. The close relationship may be read from her letters to Greville from those times. In her letter from 1794, she describes the Queen. "No person can be so charming as the Queen. She is everything one can wish, —the best mother, wife and friend in the world. I live constantly with her, and have done intimately so for 2 years, and I never have in all that time seen anything but goodness and sincerity in her, contradict them, and if you should see a cursed book written by a vile french dog with her character in it, don't believe one word." Nevertheless, from Marie Carolina's side, at the beginning, in 1793, it was clearly a political friendship. It is possible that this changed over time, but it is also possible that it did not. Later in her life, when Emma was going through a crisis, Marie Carolina never thought of her and never offered any help.

3. Life of Nelson

3. 1. Early youth of Nelson

Horatio Nelson was born on 29th September 1758 in a village called Burnham Thorpe in the country of Norfolk. His mother's name was Catherine and his father, Edmund, was a priest. Horatio's childhood was easy, since he spent it with his siblings in the parsonage house. When his mother died in 1767, her brother, Captain Maurice Suckling, visited the rest of the family and offered one of the children a job at his ship. It was very hard for Horatio to part with his brother William who had been his mate for many years. "The pain is felt when we are first transplanted from our native soil—when the living branch is cut out from the parent tree—is one of the most poignant which we have to endure through life. There are after-griefs which wound more deeply, which leave

behind them scars never to be effaced, which bruise the spirit, and sometimes break the heart: but never, never do we feel so keenly the want of love, the necessity of being loved, and the sense of utter desertion, as when we first leave the haven of home, and are, as it were, pushed off upon the stream of life.”¹⁶

Horatio started his duty on his uncle’s ship *Raisonnable* where he learned the basics of ship operating and navigation. Later on, Horatio was sent to a guard ship on the river Thames, but soon got bored and re-decked to a merchant ship heading to the West Indies. Commander John Rathbone was a good man, but never had sailing in his heart. He discouraged young Horatio very much from being a sailor. Fortunately, he did not manage to do so. After coming back to England, Horatio went back to serve under his uncle, who reconciled him to the navy.

When Horatio heard about a journey to the North Pole being put together, he got interested. Thanks to the influence of his uncle, he got hired to one of the ships, *Racehorse*, to be the coxswain under Captain Lutwidge. The two ships, *Racehorse* and *Carcass*, set sail 4th June heading as far north as possible. Soon, they reached the icy waters of the north and both ships got stuck in the ice. Even though Horatio had never had a body of a sailor, he showed signs of great courage at a very young age. This journey was very dangerous by its own means, but Horatio even attempted to hunt down and kill a bear to bring the skin to his father, when the ships were unable to move. As soon as the scouts found a way out of the ice, they worked unbelievably hard to get westward. Finally, the ships were able to sail again, but no other attempt to head north was made, because of the late season.

After this campaign, Horatio returned to England and was immediately sent to the East Indies on *Seahorse*. At first, he was employed as a watchman, later promoted to midshipman. But the climate in the East Indies was not good for his weak physical construction and therefore was sent back to England on board of *Dolphin*. When his health got better, he managed to go on one more journey to Gibraltar, before he attempted to pass his exams for lieutenantcy. The exams were very demanding, but Horatio managed to pass them because of his rather big experience from campaigns he had participated. He did not even use

¹⁶ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 3-4.

his uncle's influence, which he could, because Maurice Suckling was one of the members of the committee.

Horatio became a sailor and only one day after his exams he got the position of second lieutenant on the *Lowestoffe* frigate under Captain William Locker. They sailed to Jamaica, where Nelson spent quite a lot of time. He soon became friends with Captain Locker and he recommended him to Sir Peter Parker to the *Bristol* flagship. On 8th December 1778, while Nelson was a commander of *Badger* brig, the ship would burn to ashes if it weren't for the promptness of Nelson. They were anchored in Motego Bay and ship *Glasgow* burst into flames, when one of the sailors was probably stealing rum, and Nelson promptly gave orders to throw all the gun powder into the water and point their guns upward to prevent further life loss. "Nelson was fortunate in possessing good interest at the time when it could be most serviceable to him; his promotion had been almost as rapid as it could be; and before he had attained the age of twenty-one he had gained the rank which brought all the honours of the service within his reach. No opportunity, indeed, had yet been given to him to distinguish himself; but he was thoroughly master of his profession, and his zeal and ability were acknowledged wherever he was known."¹⁷

3. 2. Nicaragua

On 6th February 1778, France signed up an agreement with American rebels. On 16th June 1779 Spain declared war to Great Britain. Things did not look good for England and it needed to interfere. The plan was to take Fort San Juan and therefore cut off Spanish North and South. Nelson's quest was to accompany the ships till they reach San Juan River and then head back, but he decided not to. He knew the surroundings and led the men up the river till they reached Castle San Juan. The conditions were not positive for anyone. Nelson was suffering due to the local climate. The nature was very dangerous for someone who didn't know it and many men died due to the bad water resource. This campaign was a conflict taking five months, but the main enemy was the

¹⁷ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 14.

nature here. One day before the San Juan Fort gave in, Nelson was appointed to *Janus*, but because of his poor health, he was unable to take command and had to travel back to England on the ship of Captain Cornwallis, *Lion*. Nelson later said that he owed Cornwallis his life.

3. 3. *Albemarle and France*

In a miserable state of body and mind, Nelson went to Bath for three months and after coming back to London, he did not get employed for another four months. When he was finally appointed the ship *Albemarle*, he fell sick again, while preparing it to set sail. Despite the difficulties, Nelson got the opportunity to discover the Danish coast at that time. Lord Sandwich from the Admiralty then asked Nelson to accompany one of the business ships across the Atlantic Ocean and then *Albemarle* headed to Quebec, Canada. At this time, he met Alexander Davison, who became a very good friend to Nelson. Horatio also experienced his first love feelings in this period. He got madly in love with Mary Simpson, but fortunately Alexander prevented him from staying there to marry her, not only because the British navy would suffer by that move, but also because Mary did not like the vision of being a wife of a poor sailor.

Nelson was a very good captain and was very much loved by his crew. The men were loyal and had enough discipline. When the ship came back to England, there was some confusion and the men were in danger of being paid less than they deserved. Therefore, the first thing that Nelson did after his arrival to Britain was that he made sure that every one of his men got paid for their services.

After this interesting time, there was a pretty long period of peace in England and therefore Nelson had decided to travel to France with his friend James Macnamara and widen his knowledge of French. Beside language, he decided to explore the secrets of women. In the end he fell in love with one. She was a daughter of an English clergyman and her name was Elizabeth Andrews. In these harsh times, Nelson was trying to obtain some money to be able to ask Elizabeth to marry him so he wrote a letter to his uncle William Suckling, who generously offered him a sufficient amount. But the money was not enough and

after an unsuccessful attempt to win her heart and hand, Nelson went back to England to grieve for his recently deceived sister Anne and to forget about cruel love.

3. 4. *Boreas and Navigation Act*

Soon after he returned to his homeland, he had been assigned to a ship called *Boreas*, 28 guns. Nelson used this opportunity to take some inexperienced men on board and also employ his brother William as the priest. In the West Indies Nelson was promoted to senior captain and he was to take care of the northern part of Martinique. Since the Americans wanted their freedom, gave up their heritage and separated from Britain, the Navigation Act commanded that American ships should not trade directly with British colonies. Nelson's responsibility was to enforce this law. But the senior officers did not like his excessive responsibility, therefore he argued with many of his superiors. Even though they were telling him to let it go, he did not want to disobey the law of England. After some time of struggle, things did not look good for Nelson, he was being sued for forcing the Parliament Act, so he wrote a letter to Sir Richard, but he did not help him either. Later he did thank Nelson for doing such a great job. But because nobody was to support him at that time, he was sued by some American ship and was to pay an unbelievable amount of money (up to £ 40,000) to repay their loss. One good thing was that Nelson was at least protected on the costs of the Crown from being put into jail or worse. In the end, he was not the one who was thanked for enforcing the law, but others, who originally did not support him, were. "Had they known all, ... I do not think they would have bestowed thanks to that quarter, and neglected me. I feel much hurt that, after the loss of health and risk of fortune, another should be thanked for what I did against his orders. I either deserve to be sent out of the service, or at least to have had some little notice taken of what I had done. They have thought it worthy of notice, and yet have neglected me. If this is reward for a

faithful discharge of my duty, I shall be careful, and never stand forward again. But I have done my duty, and I have nothing to accuse myself of.”¹⁸

3. 5. Marriage

After feeling really upset because of the insufficient appreciation for his actions from the British navy and nation, he thought he found his fortune when he met Mrs. Nisbet, who was a widowed niece of Mr. Hebert. They married on 11th March 1787 and Nelson took her son Josiah as his own. Even though he loved Fanny a lot, he always preferred his work. Fanny was very supportive, but never was able to fully grab Nelson’s heart.

When *Boreas* got back to England, it served as a sloop and receiving ship from June to November. Nelson considered this a very unworthy treatment and when the ship was ready to be paid off, Nelson was prepared to leave the career of a navy commander forever. “It will release me for ever from an ungrateful service, for it is my firm and unalterable determination never again to set my foot on board a king’s ship.”¹⁹ Nelson wanted to give up his admiralty, but fortunately, one of the officers prevented him from doing so.

When Nelson visited his father to introduce his new wife to him, two men came to his house when he was gone and asked him to pay damages to American captains he pursued earlier. This was another time when Nelson had decided that he would leave the service and the country if the government does not support him in this issue. Fortunately it did not happen and after a fairly long time of vacation, Nelson heard that *Raisonnable*, which was the very first ship he has ever been to, was to be commissioned. “In the winter of 1792, when we were on the eve of the Anti-Jacobin war, Nelson once more offered his services, earnestly requested a ship, and added, that if their lordship should be pleased to appoint him to a cockle-boat he should feel satisfied.”²⁰

¹⁸ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 33-34.

¹⁹ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 37.

²⁰ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 43.

3. 6. Agamemnon

Nelson was appointed to *Agamemnon* of 64 guns on 30th January 1793. This ship was under the command of Lord Hood and set out to Mediterranean. They reached the Kingdom of Naples on 10th September 1793. The first time Nelson met Lord Hamilton together with his beautiful wife was even before the British fleet could enter the harbour of Naples. “Sir William, after his first interview with him, told Lady Hamilton he was about to introduce a little man to her, who could not boast of being very handsome, but such a man as, he believed, would one day astonish the world... Thus that acquaintance began which ended in the destruction of Nelson’s domestic happiness.”²¹

4. Nelson becoming the hero of Naples

Ever since the time they met, Horatio’s and Emma’s lives were affected by each other and therefore they cannot be written as separate persons. Their first meeting was neither interesting nor extraordinary in any way, Nelson only said that she was a woman of great manners and she paid a lot of her attention to his stepson Josiah.

The British considered Naples to be a great ally in their fight against the French, because Marie Carolina was a sister to dead Marie Antoinette and King Ferdinand was a powerful line of Bourbons. Naples needed England and England needed Naples. Ferdinand even called the English the saviours of his kingdom. ”The news he brought, the sight of an English sixty-four, lifted the Neapolitan Court from a state of fear and indecision to one of joyous excitement.”²² At first this cooperation went smoothly, since King Ferdinand provided Nelson with his 4,000 soldiers instead of 2,000 necessary.

²¹ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 44.

²² E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 114-115.

4. 1. Corsica

Nelson fulfilled his orders and his next quest was to go to Tunis to join Commodore Linzee. Soon afterwards he was detached to cooperate with General Paoli and the Anti-Gallican party in Corsica. “And so Nelson left Naples, to return no more for five years—five years into which he crowded much service and suffering; sieges on shore and fighting at sea.”²³ The French won back the city of Toulon, which Lord Hood gained at first without any fight, and it was necessary to prevent the French from gaining Corsican towns of Calvi and Bastia. Nelson’s objective was to blockade the towns to prevent reinforcement and supply to come to them. Nelson tried to convince Lord Hood to attack the forts from the sea. He received information that the French army was much stronger than they had expected, but had hidden it from Lord Hood, because he was afraid it would repel him from attacking the forts. The men landed near Bastia on 4th April, at that time Nelson was already a brigadier. On 19th May the treaty of capitulation began and Nelson claimed that he “... always was of opinion, have ever acted up to it, and never had any reason to repent it, that one Englishman was equal to three Frenchmen.”²⁴ At the very same day, Nelson was thanked by Lord Hood and he felt reasonably proud of his decision-making. On the other hand, Lord Hood’s report to British Government (probably because of the time pressure) did not contain a single remark made to Nelson and therefore he did not get rewarded otherwise than being sincerely thanked by his friend Lord Hood.

When Bastia was held in their hand, it was time to move to Calvi. The siege was very hard because of the conditions, but Nelson stayed with his men and unfortunately, on 12th June 1794, Nelson’s right eye was hurt. At first he insisted that it is just a minor injury and he did not even want to get looked at by the doctor. When he started to lose his eyesight he finally admitted that it is a serious injury. It was so serious that Nelson completely lost his eyesight and had to get used to living with only one eye.

The siege of Calvi was a little harder than that one of Bastia, because the British soldiers were exhausted, sick from bad water and ill of local diseases.

²³ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 118.

²⁴ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 57.

General Stuart decided to send Lord Hood a note that if he does not send back-ups, he will have to be forced to attack the fort or to give up. The French army, however, was not doing very well either and gave up on 1st August.

4. 2. *Ça Ira*

Soon after the battle *Agamemnon* was sent to Livorno to get repaired. Lord Hood went back to England because of his health issues and Admiral Hotham got the command. Soon, the news of French ships leaving Toulon ended the period of repairs and Nelson set sail to chase the Frenchmen. Even though, they had much more men, they were inexperienced. The revolution caused the loss of many wise commanders and admirals, so Nelson was not feeling down. He was now chasing the biggest of enemy's ships *Ça Ira* and he managed to make it surrender. Nelson was prepared to chase the other ships to make the victory more astonishing, but Admiral Hotham said that this deed was good enough and did not want to put his ships into a bigger risk. Nelson commented this event in a letter to his wife. "I wish ... to be an admiral, and in the command of the English fleet; I should very soon either do much, or be ruined: my disposition cannot bear tame and slow measures."²⁵ Admiral Hotham was replaced by Admiral John Jervis, who later became Earl St. Vincent.

4. 3. *Position of Spain, Cape St. Vincent*

At that time, Spain was in a very difficult situation, because soon after the beginning of the republic in France, Spain allied with Great Britain, Austria, Netherlands and Prussia into the First Coalition against French rebels. Three years after, in 1796, Spain was forced to make peace with France in San Ildefonso. Here is an extract from a letter from Charles to Ferdinand explaining his actions, which through Lady Hamilton's hands let England know about Spain's treason. "... the loss of some fortresses and of a considerable portion of

²⁵ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 65.

my frontier provinces; and lastly (what weighs with me most of all) the desire of sparing the blood spent as yet so vainly by my faithful people, —these are motives, dear Brother, which have induced me finally to abandon the hostile system, which I accurately followed so long as I could employ and uphold my armies with any hope of remedying, by force of arms, the evils of France.”²⁶

Nelson’s *La Minerve* was chased by a Spanish fleet and he had two options. He could either sail to Admiral Jervis to tell him the position of the Spanish fleet or he could sail to the West Indies and warn the local authorities about the coming attack. He chose the first one. He was soon talking to Admiral Jervis on board of his ship *Victory* near Cape St. Vincent’s. On 14th February, the enemy was in sight and the battle begun. During the engagement, Nelson disobeyed his superiors in order to prevent the Spanish fleet from sailing away without a battle and in the end, English won and therefore gained full control of the Mediterranean. “For the victory the commander-in-chief [Admiral Jervis] was rewarded with the title of Earl St. Vincent. Nelson, who, before the action was known in England, had been advanced to the rank of rear-admiral, had the Order of the Bath given him.”²⁷

4. 4. Lady Hamilton’s share

Lady Hamilton believed, and later persuaded Nelson to also believe, that she had a huge share in making this victory possible. Thanks to her close relationship to the queen, Emma was able to find out the information about Spain’s defection from the Coalition and transmit it through her husband to the English government. At this time, there were two different streams flowing in the Court of Naples. Since Ferdinand was in very good touch with his brother, King Charles of Spain, and was therefore very much influenced by his opinions, he was not sure, whether to defend his kingdom against the French influence or to give in and put his little kingdom into the arms of France. His Austrian wife, Marie Carolina, on the other hand knew exactly what she wanted and therefore took things into her own hands and did not hesitate to secretly check on her

²⁶ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 126.

²⁷ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 90.

husband's correspondence. And she had her own channel of communication with England through Lady Hamilton. It would have been suspicious if she was writing letters to Lord Hamilton all the time, but a communication between two ladies was not unusual at all. Here is a part of Maria Carolina's note to Emma. "My very dear Lady, —My head is so confused, and my soul so shaken, that I know not what to do. I hope to see you to-morrow morning about ten o'clock. I send you a letter in cypher, come from Spain, from Galatone, which must be returned before twenty-four hours, in order that the King may find it again. There [are] some facts very important for the English Government, which I wish to communicate to them, to show my attachment to them, and the confidence I feel in the worthy Chevalier, whom I only beg not to compromise me."²⁸

Although Emma believed that her part in this political play was huge, it probably was not so. She was the queen's friend, but she was also a tool, which basically any other woman could have become. "She copied, she translated, she transmitted; but it is impossible to believe that Marie Carolina would not have done exactly the same, though with more difficulty, had Lady Hamilton been nonexistent."²⁹ In this period Emma believed that she was irreplaceable and that she had a true friend in Marie Carolina. Later in her life, when Emma needed help, her supposed friend, the Queen did not aid her in any way. That is when Emma realized, how much she had been used. Also, forwarding the letter from Charles was later reminded by both Nelson and Emma in order to bring her services to the attention of her country, when she needed its help. But it was not successful, probably because of Emma's love of theatrical effects, because of which she described the events in her own exaggerated ways.

4. 5. *Theseus*

After the victory at St. Vincent, Nelson relocated to *Theseus*. It was a former rebellion ship brought recently to the Mediterranean and because Horatio was known for his ability to gain respect of his superiors, he was put in charge of this difficult ship. Nelson was employed in the command at the

²⁸ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 123-124.

²⁹ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 124.

blockade of Cadiz. This service was one of the most dangerous for him and he also wrote so in one of his letters to his wife Fanny. During the night attack, when English were greatly outnumbered, Nelson's personal courage and determination helped them to hold on and persist.

Twelve days later, 15th July 1797, Nelson headed towards Tenerife Island. A report said that the viceroy of Mexico was staying on this island together with the treasure-ships. The plan was to begin the attack on the town of Santa Cruz during the night, but the weather was bad and in the morning when the frigates were spotted by defenders, they had to drop back from their plan. Nevertheless, he tried again on the 24th. And it was a very unsuccessful try. Almost all of the ships got wrecked and many men died. When Nelson himself tried to step out of a boat, he received a shot through his right elbow. As you can see on the picture (attachment 5) by Richard Westall, called Nelson Wounded at Tenerife, Horatio fell back into the ship and got caught by his stepson Josiah. Josiah also made some preventive first aid in order to save his life, which he managed, but at this infamous battle Nelson's right arm had to be amputated. Josiah knew, that in order to save Nelson's life, the boat would have to get back to one of the ships and the surgeon as soon as possible. Nelson refused to get onboard of *Seahorse*, which was the first ship they found and insisted on getting to *Theseus*. Losing his hand affected Nelson greatly, as he shows in an informal letter to Lord St. Vincent. "I am become... a burthen to my friends, and useless to my country... When I leave your command, I become dead to the world... A left handed admiral... will never again be considered as useful; therefore the sooner I get to a very humble cottage the better; and make room for a sounder man to serve the state."³⁰

As soon as the peace agreement was made, Spanish soldiers got their own boats to try to save some of the remaining sailors from the cold water, they accepted the wounded into their hospitals and offered them the best provision possible. Nelson's stepson Josiah got promoted immediately for saving Nelson's life and acting with a cool head during the battle.

Seahorse then took Nelson back to England. At the time spent in England, according to his wife, one of the most realistic portraits of Nelson by

³⁰ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 99.

Lemuel Abbott was painted (attachment 6). Nelson had decided that he would never be able to help his country again and he decided to stay home for ever.

4. 6. Return to Naples

Meanwhile in Naples, the hopes of the Queen for the English help became stronger. There sure was a reason, why England was called “The Mistress of the Seas” at that time. After the execution of Marie Antoinette and her husband, Marie Carolina got very upset and punished Jacobins for all the events going on. She put all of them into prison and released them after four years under the pressure of events going on. It is very clear, that Emma’s deeds at that time were very much influenced by Queen’s anger. Emma commented on the recent events just before Jacobins got released in one of her letters to Nelson. “The Jacobins have all been lately declared innocent after suffering four years of imprisonment; and I know, they all deserved to be hanged long ago.”³¹

In the five years between Emma saw Nelson for the first time and when he came back to Naples as the Hero of the Nile, Emma got very much close to Marie Carolina and the events in Europe changed a lot. France seemed to grow much stronger and it paralysed the Coalition, which practically fell apart. “Napoleon’s star was rising over the Continent he was to turn into one vast battlefield—a star crimson as that of Mars. His Italian campaign visibly shook the Kingdom of Naples, while the tramp of his victorious armies was a sound of imminent doom and disruption to the Queen, who saw herself without soldiers and without a navy...”³²

Naples’ only hope was the help of England and Austria. Nevertheless, in 1797, Austria signed peace with France leaving England as the only friend to Naples. England’s power in the Mediterranean decreased and in the end, all the English ships had to leave the sea and the Queen of Naples felt abandoned by her only friends.

It is probable that Nelson did not make much impression on Emma, when they first met, only after the victory on St. Valentine’s Day of 1797,

³¹ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 119.

³² E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 120.

Nelson became to be known and his name praised. Nelson's glory was probably the first thing that caught her attention. She loved drama and around him, there was always plenty of attention for both of them. The other reason why Emma wanted to get close to Nelson was that Marie Carolina wished so in order to higher the chances of befriending England.

Fortunately, England's position in the Mediterranean was soon restored. The Prime Minister of Naples, Sir Acton, pushed on Sir Hamilton to write to England for help and he did so, but it was Lady Hamilton's letter, which made Lord St. Vincent to answer in a positive way and ensure some comfort for the Queen. When they heard that Nelson was in charge of the English squadron, they were relieved, but it took several weeks before the threat of the French fleet was destroyed.

4. 7. Battle of Nile and Emma's help

Fortunately, early in 1798, Sir Horatio Nelson changed his mind about abandoning the navy and was sent with his ship *Vanguard* to rejoin Earl St. Vincent and immediately to the Mediterranean in order to take care of Bonaparte's fleet setting out from Toulon. The situation in Mediterranean was very uncertain, but the British government was becoming to get confident about their position in there. "The British Government at this time, with a becoming spirit, gave orders that any port in the Mediterranean should be considered as hostile, where the governor, or chief magistrate, should refuse to let our ships of war proclude supplies of provisions, or of any article which they might require."³³ Only ports of Sardinia were an exception of this rule, because they were basically in possession of French soldiers. At this time, nobody knew the position or intentions of the French fleet. Baffled in Bonaparte's pursuit, Nelson returned to Sicily. Unfortunately, the local ministry declined assistance, because they did not want to endanger their peace with the French Directory. In order to maintain neutrality, no more than four English ships were allowed to enter their ports. Emma then played one of her favourite dramatic scenes. "She told the Queen that all would be lost if Nelson's fleet was not freely supplied, and thus

³³ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 103.

enabled to follow the French.”³⁴ Marie Carolina wrote a secret order, which she would probably write even without Emma’s intervention. But Emma believed that it was her actions that saved the day. “By means, however, of Lady Hamilton’s influence at court, he procured secret orders to the Sicilian governors; and, under those orders, obtained everything which he wanted at Syracuse—a timely supply, without which, he always said, he could not have recommenced his pursuit with any hope of success.”³⁵ Nelson encouraged by their help, wrote to Lord and Lady Hamilton. “Thanks to your exertions... we have victualled and watered; and surely watering at the fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze; and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress.”³⁶

And Nelson fulfilled his promises and set sail the very next day to Malta, where he was convinced to encounter with the enemy. Soon afterwards, Nelson’s fleet met another British fleet, which told him that Malta surrendered to the French army without any fight. Nelson knew that Malta was not the main target of such a huge campaign. Some said, the target was Sicily, but Nelson thought that the French would probably want to lower the British power in the Orient. The French fleet left Malta just one day after they seized it. Therefore they must have been very close to Nelson. He even sailed to Alexandria, but did not find anything else than Turkish ships and therefore left. As he later found out, the French fleet arrived into the bay just two days after Nelson’s departure. Nelson sailed back to Syracuse and started to admit his loss. His fleet needed to refresh and the Queen’s orders helped Nelson to be able to continue his search. After such a long chase, Nelson started to get much frustrated with his inability to find Bonaparte, but finally on 1st August, they came in sight of Alexandria. And in the afternoon, they discovered the French fleet. Nelson, who had been frustrated for many past days and therefore did not eat nor drink much, ordered his dinner while the ship was preparing for the great battle. One of the good results of the long pursuit was that Nelson taught all of his captains various modern tactics of attacks.

³⁴E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 142.

³⁵ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 109.

³⁶ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 110.

“The French fleet arrived at Alexandria on the 1st of July; and Bruyes (French commander) not being able to enter the port, which time and neglect had ruined, moored his ships in Aboukir Bay, in a strong and compact line of battle; the headmost vessel, according to his own account, being as close as possible to a shoal on the N. W., and the rest of the fleet forming a kind of curve along the line of deep water, so as not to be turned by any means in the S. W. By Buonaparte’s desire he had offered a reward of 10,000 livres to any pilot of the country, who would carry the squadron in; but none could be found who would venture to take charge of a single vessel drawing more than twenty feet.”³⁷

The French outnumbered the English both in men and firearms. They had the advantage of being prepared, when Nelson arrived. You can see the position of the French ships and the direction of Nelson’s attack on the map in attachment 7. His plan was to slip through the west side of the French line and double the enemy’s ships. This plan was originally projected by Lord Hood, when he was planning on attacking the French in Gourjean Road, but he never made it happen, because he found it impossible to attempt it. When one of his captains called Berry asked what is the world going to say if they succeed. Nelson replied “There is no if in the case... that we shall succeed is certain: who may live to tell the story is a very different question.”³⁸ Nelson realized the danger he was exposing his fleet to. But the risk paid off. Despite the uneven number of ships, Nelson defeated the French fleet even though he himself got injured. At first, he thought that he lost his healthy eye, but it was only the skin from the forehead that fell over it and blood covered his whole face. The most victorious moment of the whole battle was when the biggest and the strongest ship of the whole French fleet, L’Orient, exploded into pieces. Later, Nelson was given a gift of a coffin made from the mast of this gigantic ship.

After the victory, Nelson wrote to Sir Hamilton. “Almighty God has made me the happy instrument in destroying the enemy’s fleet; which, I hope, will be a blessing to Europe.”³⁹ The joy that spread throughout the Kingdom of Two Sicilies was overwhelming. Emma felt that she had partly credited in this

³⁷ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 111-112.

³⁸ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 113.

³⁹ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 150.

glorious victory. By her kind joy and simple admiration to everyone, who participated in the victory, Emma soon grabbed hearts of most of the navy commanders on the sea. She was very much happy and adored Nelson more than ever before. On the 8th September, she wrote to him. “I shou’d feel it a glory to die in such a cause. No, I wou’d not like to die till I see and embrace the Victor of the Nile... I walk and tread in air with pride, feeling I was born in the same land with the victor Nelson and his gallant band... All the English vie with each other in the celebrating this most galland and ever memorable victory... For God’s sake come to Naples soon. We receive so many Sonets and Letters of congratulation. I send you some of them to shew you how your success is felt here... I wou’d have been rather an English powder-monkey, or a swab in that great victory, than an Emperor out of it, but you will be so tired of all this. Write or come soon to Naples, and rejoin your ever sincere and obliged friend.”⁴⁰

When Nelson reached the Bay of Naples, the King and the Hamiltons came out three leagues to greet him. He later described this occasion in detail in a letter to his wife. Lady Hamilton fainted from joy after seeing her hero, the King shook his hand and called him ‘Nosotro Liberatore’, which means our liberator. Nelson also describes the kindness of Sir William and his wife and his intention of staying at the apartment at Palazzo Sessa, which had been prepared for him by Lady Hamilton. Nelson ends his letter with a wish to see his wife again soon and hopes for a happy meeting. This letter was one of the last loving ones to his wife. Meanwhile she was obediently waiting at home, Nelson and Emma got much closer than he would ever imagine. At first, Nelson was very anxious to get back to the sea as soon as possible; nevertheless, his eagerness was falling away with the growing passion for Emma.

Sometimes, Emma did not realize that by her affection she might even endanger Nelson’s life. When he was still weakened from the exhausting sail and stricken by a high fever, Emma held a great ball at Palazzo Sessa to celebrate his birthday. On the other hand, she was a good nurse and in the end was able to restore her hero’s health in full strength.

⁴⁰ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 151-153.

Emma even wrote a letter to Mrs. Nelson in which she congratulates her for her husband's achievements and believes to be 'her Ladyship's very sincere friend'. There is no doubt that neither Emma nor Horatio had any intention of consciously hurting Mrs. Nelson by getting so attached and close to each other. Nelson describes Emma as an angel and claims her to be his ambassadress to the Queen. "This statement reveals the beginning of his faith in Lady Hamilton's diplomatic abilities; and judging from the evidence it seems clear that it was not simply her beauty, her enthusiasm, and her womanly tenderness that drew Nelson towards her, but a belief in her qualities of head as well as heart."⁴¹

5. Nelson and Emma, Britain and Naples

At first Nelson did not even want to go to Naples after the big battle. He even said that he detested the journey. If he had not fallen ill, he probably would have sailed directly back to England. When reaching the Court, he was delighted by all the joy showed, but he thought of Naples as a theatrical and incompetent country. Soon, when he got closer to Lady Hamilton, he started to adopt most of her opinions and views in important matters, which were basically those accepted from Marie Carolina.

5. 1. Naples at war

It is not sure, whether Nelson really wanted to help the Court of Naples or was driven by his hatred to the French. What we know is that he accelerated the decision of Naples to go into an open war with the French after they managed to take Rome. From his letters to the Hamiltons, we can see that he was very much convinced that the war is the only way how to protect the Kingdom and the Royal Family from the power of France. Nelson and many others like the Queen and Emma were convinced that waiting was just losing

⁴¹ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 165.

the precious moment of supremacy and the war was to be held as soon as possible. But the King hesitated. Nelson left for Malta in order to regain the island from the grasp of the French, but kept closely in touch with Emma through many letters. Emma meanwhile tried to stay as close to the Queen as possible and influence her and indirectly Ferdinand by reading Nelson's advices to them. On the other hand, Emma kept Nelson posted about the current events in the Court by sending him many journal-like letters. "That Nelson should have urged this act upon the weak and unstable kingdom was one of his rare failures in judgement, and it's consequences were doubly disastrous—not merely to Naples and the misguided Court, but disastrous to Nelson himself, who was thus bound, by ties he could not sever without an appearance of desertion, to a Court he had partly led into war, and this tangle was the beginning of his connection with Lady Hamilton."⁴²

Finally after a period of refusals, Austria decided to aid the little Kingdom and at last General Mack began to prepare his army to march south. And Emma was very proud of herself thinking that it was mainly thanks to her that the things got moving and that the plan to grip the French between the two allied armies was starting to become a reality.

General Mack was considered to be the most competent man to lead Neapolitan soldiers currently existing on the continent. There were great hopes and expectations put into his leadership and himself. When the Queen saw him for the first time, she said: "Be to us by land, general, what my hero Nelson has been by sea."⁴³ By the end of November, general Mack and King Ferdinand marched together towards Rome to gain back the city. They entered it with triumph, but that was also their last one. On 7th December, the King fled back from Rome, after general Mack's army was basically destroyed and the King's untrained army of common men quickly fell apart. The French chased Ferdinand back to Naples and in the end even crossed the borders. Now the whole Court was trembling in fear of having the same destiny as the French Court and Royalty. Nevertheless, the situation was much more complicated for Ferdinand. He still had some supporters called The Lazzaroni, but they were ready to tear him and his family apart as soon as he showed signs of even

⁴² E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 166.

⁴³ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 136.

thinking about running away from his kingdom and leaving his people alone. They were so loyal that they were walking around murdering anyone, who was even suspected of being French or sympathised with French nationality.

5. 2. Shadow of death and going to Palermo

The Queen was ready to stay with her people and her determination was unshaken. She was not going to leave. She wanted to send her family into safety though, but that was not possible either. When the French were approaching closer and closer to Naples, she started to prepare herself for death. “I have renounced this world... I have renounced my reputation as wife and mother. I am preparing to die, and making ready for an eternity for which I long. This is all that is left to me.”⁴⁴

Emma, on the other hand, was not ready to die yet. In a way, she was enjoying all the drama and she considered the situation as some kind of setting in a theatre play, in which she played a major role. At the peak of her political career, she felt powerful and strong. Emma and Nelson made it happen. He provided enough room to take the Royal Family together with their whole treasury and she took care of the rest. Through the British Embassy were the casts of gold and jewellery inconspicuously passing onto *Goliath. Vanguard* was meanwhile getting ready to accept Sicilian Majesties during night and getting repaired at daylight. They were trying very hard to hide their preparations and had to attend to their daily duties, such as attending receptions and formal events, as usually.

During the night of 21st December Emma and Marie Carolina with their families, Nelson and many refugees ventured safely on board of the British flagship. Nevertheless, the ship was not able to set sail until the evening of the next day.

Emma behaved quite bravely during her stay on the ship. She took care of the whole Royal family and provided them with every comfort she was able to obtain. Despite her efforts the youngest son of Marie Carolina, Prince Albert, aged six, died in her arms during a storm that caught them on their way to

⁴⁴ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 180.

Palermo. The King landed publicly in Palermo on 26th December. The Queen was unable to do so. She was miserable and depressed from the death of her youngest and she did not get much support from Ferdinand, since he blamed her English sympathies for their current situation.

5. 3. *Life in Palermo*

Sir Hamilton was not very happy about staying in Palermo. He was surely getting older and he felt it on his health. The house they lived in was not suitable for being inhabited in winter and therefore Sir Hamilton was planning on going back to England on the first ship that Nelson will send in the direction of Gibraltar. He was also very distressed from having to leave most of his antique treasures from his collection in Naples. He could pack only the most important pieces and most of them were lost at the sea. Lord and Lady Hamilton shared their house in Palermo with Nelson. Their common relationship was growing closer and the shade of scandal was starting to form. Both Emma and Sir Hamilton liked to call the three of them ‘*Tria juncta in uno*’, which means ‘Three joined in one’.

Nelson’s health was also in a pretty bad state. He expressed the seriousness of his illness in some of his letters by stating that he is not afraid of death and that if it is God’s will he is prepared to enter the eternity. Nevertheless, Emma took very good care of Nelson. And she was very good at it. Nelson knew that coming back to England would help him to recover completely, but could not break his promise that he would not desert Marie Carolina and also England’s promise in the Fourth Article of the Anglo-Sicilian Treaty from 1798 to keep the naval force in the Mediterranean. One of the biggest reasons for Nelson to stay was also the presence of Emma. It did not matter if they were in Naples or in Palermo, Emma was still in the middle of the political stage. She translated, transcribed, nursed and pleased everyone with her presence.

5. 4. Parthenopean Republic

Meanwhile in Naples a lot had happened. The Court left Prince Francesco Pignatelli to be Ferdinand's regent during his absence. Nevertheless, this choice had soon proven to be a very bad one. Prince Pignatelli was a weak figure in hands of strong people who called themselves 'Patriots', he shifted from one side to another and then driven by fear from both sides, deserted both the French and Neapolitans and fled to Sicily. The Jacobin rising was inevitable, even though Lazzaroni were really convincing about their loyalty. The Bourbon rule came to a final end when in January Naples was surrendered to the French General Championnet, the Parthenopean Republic was proclaimed.

Nelson wrote to St. Vincent expressing his uneasiness and feeling responsible for the current situation of the Royal Family. "Our country... is looked to as a resource for all the difficulties of this."⁴⁵ Help was expected from the side of Austria and Russia. Also, when the King heard about the weak foundations on which the Republic was standing and the willingness of lower class to remain loyal, he appointed Cardinal Fabrizio Ruffo to raise an army among peasants who would fight on the royalist side. The King appointed Ruffo with almost unlimited powers and supported him with encouraging letters throughout the campaign. And it was successful. The exuberant army managed to drive the French out from the outlying provinces, till the Republic shrank only to the city of Naples itself. While Ruffo was marching on land, Nelson's ships were also fully engaged, even though he stayed with the Queen and of course Emma. In her letters Marie Carolina expressed a huge desire to get revenge, to punish everyone and everything participating in this uprising. On the other hand, Ferdinand felt it was his Christian duty to forgive his country and all the people who live in it. Nelson of course tended to take over the Queen's opinions through Emma's words.

The final blockade of the city of Naples was put in hands of Captain Troubridge: a Captain whom Nelson had known long before and of whom he once said that he "on shore is superior to captains afloat! Our friend Troubridge is as full of resources as his Culloden is full of accidents; but I am now satisfied,

⁴⁵ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 202.

that if his ship's bottom were entirely out, he would find means to make her swim."⁴⁶ When his ships reached the harbour of Naples, it was clear to everyone that the days of the Republic were over. Finally on 22nd April the French evacuated Naples and left 500 men behind in the Castle of St. Elmo. Troubridge and his ships were soon summoned from the Bay of Naples and Captain Foote was appointed senior officer in matters of negotiations with the rebels.

Nelson was content in the presence of Emma, but his sailor's spirit was still inside of him, hidden, waiting for the opportunity to get back to the sea again. And when the opportunity came in May, he was more than happy to get into action again and proclaimed that he would protect Naples the best by chasing the French in the Mediterranean. Only after the departure had he realized how much he missed the presence of both of his friends. It is clear from his letters and his first codicil that Emma was at that time already more than a friend. The Queen, who used Emma as her tool, also indirectly influenced Nelson.

Marie Carolina and Ferdinand finally agreed on one thing – it is necessary to clear Naples of all rebels, before they can sail back to their home. And Nelson was appointed to do so. He set off from Palermo, but decided to come back as soon as he heard the news that the French fleet had left Toulon and he at once became the target of a terrible rumour that he sailed back, because he was so terribly afraid of the powerful French fleet. Also, Cardinal Ruffo together with Captain Foote had concluded an armistice with the rebels, despite having no permission to act in such delicate matter. These two events were the main reasons, why Nelson decided immediately to turn around and make sail to Naples. But he did not sail alone; Sir and Lady Hamilton had decided to go with him on board of his new flagship *Foudroyant*.

When reaching the Bay of Naples and seeing the white flags on both the Jacobin forts, Uovo and Nuovo, but also on Captain Foote's ship *Seahorse*, he at once signalled the annulment of the treaty. Nelson was of the opinion that the arrival of the British fleet is a good reason to annul the agreement as well as the arrival of the French one would be, if they had the power to send the fleet. The garrison that was hiding in St. Elmo was French and therefore Nelson was

⁴⁶ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 206.

willing to grant them the terms of war if they surrender within two hours. On the other hand the rebels in the two forts were Neapolitan traitors and were not allowed to embark or leave so they had to surrender to his Majesty's mercy. Sir and Lady Hamilton were both in an agreement with Nelson's opinions and therefore supported him when Ruffo came on board of his ship to speak on behalf of his actions. Emma was mainly helpful when translating and taking notes of their meetings. This position placed her exactly where she wished to be – in the midst of all the action. Not only did she hear everything on the meetings, but Nelson also told her everything that he wished the Queen to hear. And the Queen sent Emma all her thoughts and ideas about how the rebels should be treated and how the situation should be solved. And she was not merciful. "The rebel patriots must lay down their arms, and surrender at discretion to the pleasure of the king. Then in my opinion, an example should be made of some of the leaders of the representatives, and the others should be transported under pain of death if they return into the dominions of the king... The females who have distinguished themselves in the revolution to be treated in the same way, and that without pity... I recommend to you, therefore, my dear lady, the greatest firmness, vigour and severity; our future tranquillity and position depend upon it—the faithful people desire it."⁴⁷

Nelson's decision to act upon the wishes of the Queen is considered infamous by many. Robert Southey calls it "A deplorable transaction! A stain upon the memory of Nelson, and the honour of England! To palliate it would be in vain; to justify it would be wicked: there is no alternative, for one who will not make himself a participator in guilt, but to record the disgraceful story with sorrow and with shame."⁴⁸ Other authors see it another way and that is simply denying the event, which is mostly accepted by experts.

The act of not granting the Neapolitan Jacobins any terms and declaring the previous agreement to be invalid deepened the hatred of Jacobins towards Nelson, but also his hatred to everything and everyone French or pro-Jacobin. It became some kind of obsession to him and this obsession stayed with him throughout his whole life.

⁴⁷ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 219.

⁴⁸ Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 151.

After the capitulation, Nelson had some more issues to take care of. One of them touched Emma and him the most and it was the case of Prince Francesco Caracciolo. He used to be an Admiral in the Court of Naples. When the Royal Family decided to flee from their homes, he went with them. After a while, he asked the King for permission to sail back in order to protect his estates, which were not inconsiderable. Soon after his arrival, he got seduced by the temptation, joined the revolution and served as their naval officer. When he found out that the British fleet was coming, he fled to the mountains, got captured and tried on board of *Foudroyant*. Caracciolo was sentenced and executed on the very same day. We may consider it harsh and cruel, but it was very common to get rid of traitors as soon as possible in order to prevent other rebellious thoughts. Some writers claim that Emma was on board during the execution delighted at the sight of the revenge for her beloved Queen. Some, on the other hand claim that she was very much distressed by the events and by Nelson's cruel behaviour that she wrote many letters to Marie Carolina in order to lighten her burdened heart. I must agree that I cannot imagine Emma to take any interest in watching the execution, but she sure did enjoy all the attention and being in the middle of everything. In one of her letters to Greville, she expresses the joy of being important. "The Queen is not yet come. She sent me as her Deputy; for I am very popular, speak the Neapolitan language, and considered, with Sir William, the friend of the people. I have privily seen all the royal party, and having the head of the Lazzaronys and old friend, he came in the night of our arrival, and told me he had 90 thousand Lazeronis ready, at the holding up of his finger, but only twenty with arms. Lord Nelson, whom I enterpreted, got a large supply of arms for the rest, and they were deposited with this man... We shall as soon as the government is fixed, return to Palermo, and bring back the Royal Family; for I foresee not any permanent government till that event takes place. Nor wou'd it be politick, after all the hospitality the King and Queen received at Palermo, to carry them off in a hurry. So you see there is a great management required."⁴⁹

⁴⁹E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 232-233.

5. 5. Inseparable couple

At this time Nelson received the orders to leave Naples at once and go to Minorca, but he decided to disobey the orders and wrote to his commander-in-chief Lord Keith that he has no doubts when deciding whether it was more important to save Minorca or Naples. It is not sure, if Nelson decided so because he really felt more needed in Naples or if he did not want to part from Lady Hamilton and her husband. The rumours about Emma's bad influence on him probably reached England by that time. Nelson was entrusted with the chief command in the Mediterranean, but only for the temporary absence of Lord Keith from September 1799 till the end of the year.

On the 5th August, Emma wrote to Greville that the Kingdom of Naples was clear again and on 8th of the same month, they reached the harbour of Palermo. They were all very much celebrated and many gifts were given. It must be said that Sir Hamilton was a little bit set aside into the shadows, which might have been the beginning of his downfall. Nelson was now considered more important member of their household than Sir Hamilton ever was. Emma and Nelson made Palermo their own little paradise and started to shut out the outer world.

Everyone was starting to see the blindness with which Nelson was acting. He himself was not satisfied with the actions of the Court of Naples, but could not do any differently than to support it under the influence of Emma. Troubridge had no 'Emma' to blind him therefore found the behaviour of Marie Carolina and Ferdinand very disturbing. He was not afraid to express his opinion when writing to Nelson at the beginning of the year 1800. He expressed his rage about the unwillingness of Naples to provide corn for Maltese who desperately needed it. After this letter, Emma got involved and managed to provide the corn for Maltese. On Nelson's request and for her actions Emma was bestowed upon the Grand Cross of the Order and as the only English woman to ever receive this honour could call herself 'Dame Chevaliere of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem'. Not only did Troubridge write about the political aspects of his disagreement, but he also wrote a lot to try to protect Nelson and his health from the disastrous effects of Emma's lifestyle, especially

her love for gambling not only with money, but also with her beauty, power and relationships with people around her. Even though they heard people talking about their odd family situation, they did not want to change things, because they believed it would work out for the best. Despite the rumours, friends' advice and common sense, the relationship between Emma and Horatio became much more open and by the summer of 1800, Nelson called Emma her 'wife in the sight of Heaven'.

When he was the commander-in-chief, Nelson could afford both to serve his duties at the sea and to spend time with the Hamiltons by making Palermo his headquarters. But when Lord Keith came back, his hands were more tightened and he had to pay more attention to his work. It was his utmost desire to fight the French, but he also missed the presence of Emma a lot so he was torn apart by the two biggest desires he had. Even though he was very close to confirm his dominance over the French ships by capturing the rest of the ships taking part in the Battle of Nile, he asked Lord Keith to be dismissed from his service in order to go to Palermo for a few weeks on behalf of health issues. This was the first and also the last time, when Nelson's sense of duty and love for the navy was overruled by his love for Lady Hamilton and personal happiness.

After many unsuccessful attempts to part Nelson from Emma, the last and the most powerful one was the letter from Lord Spencer, in which he advised Nelson to come back to England in order to aid his health. It was sure, that the two lovers did not want to part, so the only possible vision was to leave Italy together to go back to their homeland. Emma was scared of the thought of leaving Naples, where she liked her position so much and going back to England, where she would have to forward her spot next to Nelson to his rightful wife. Sir Hamilton on the other hand was getting old. He first mentioned leaving Naples already in his letter to Greville from middle of 1799.

The last farewell to Naples was their trip to Syracuse and Malta. Nelson wrote, that he would go home together with the Hamiltons, but it was up to Lord Keith whether by land or by sea. Of course Nelson hoped for his flagship to be sent home with him, but when they found out that Marie Carolina had decided to go to Vienna for some diplomatic and family reasons, it was decided. Without informing Lord Keith, Nelson withdrew two ships from the blockade of

Malta and took the passengers to Leghorn, where the Queen's illness postponed the journey for one whole month and since Lord Keith refused to grant them any ships they had to set out by land. It is said that Emma dragged Nelson behind him as a piece of jewellery and she showed her bad habits, taste and loss of attractiveness. Many people described her at that time and not one of the descriptions was flattering. Everyone pointed out her reign over poor Nelson, who was said to lose all of his dignity and also the fact, that Emma started to lose her magical beauty and her body started to get much bigger.

In Vienna, Emma's and Marie Carolina's ways separated after so many years and the Queen wrote a note to Emma to express her feelings and gratitude. "My dear Lady and tender friend, I repeat what I have already said, that at all times and places, under any circumstances, Emma, dear Emma, shall be my friend and sister, and this sentiment will remain unchanged. Receive my thanks once more for all you have done, and for the sincere friendship you have shown me."⁵⁰

5. 6. Back in England

Nelson and his companions reached the coast of England in town of Yarmouth, in Nelson's native country of Norfolk on 6th November 1800. Since it was his first time to reach England since the great battle of Nile, he was properly welcomed. He received the freedom of the town from the Mayor and Corporation, and many other honours. Emma used the situation as she pleased. She was standing at Nelson's side on every important speech or assembly. They were not criticised yet. The town folks did not mind about the high politics and gossip, they were truly enjoying the presence of their hero.

Meanwhile in London, Nelson's wife Fanny was patiently awaiting his arrival. Many blamed her for not travelling to Yarmouth to greet her husband as soon as he reached the land, but it seems that she acted upon his direct wish from one of his letters. She waited in London together with Nelson's aging father and prepared everything necessary for his arrival. Fanny was often blamed for not being able to hold her husband's affection, but it was probably

⁵⁰ E. Hallam Moorhouse, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 262.

her nature and inhabited calmness, that pushed Nelson away and when he met Emma full of fire and passion, he did not manage to pursue his marriage. A widow of one of Nelson's officers once wrote in defence on Fanny. "I am desirous that you should know the worth of her who had so often been misrepresented, from the wish of many to cast the blame anywhere, but on him who was so deservedly dear to the Nation. There never was a kinder heart than Lord Nelson's; but he was a child in the hands of a very designing person, and few, perhaps, could have resisted the various artifices employed to enslave the mind of the Hero, when combined with great beauty, extraordinary talents, and the semblance of an enthusiastic attachment."⁵¹

At first Nelson hoped for the two women to become friends and lead somehow a strange family life, but this was not possible. They tried to keep friendly feeling for each other for some time, but soon they found out that it is not possible to pretend friendship when there is not a slight flash of warm feelings. Also, Emma was soon to become mother of Horatio's child and therefore they went together with Sir Hamilton to spend Christmas at Fonthill Abbey. After their arrival back to London, Nelson tried to live with his wife again, but it did not take long until he left her for good and they never lived together again. Nelson was very generous and provided his wife with great portion of his yearly rent.

Horatia was born at the end of January 1801. Emma due to her physical constitution managed to hide the pregnancy till the very last moment and then hid for a few weeks using the flu as her alibi. Soon after the birth Emma hid the baby with a foster mother and left her with enough money to cover daily expenses. Later on she was brought openly to Hamilton's house, where she was brought up as Nelson's niece and Horatia had been convinced for her whole life that Emma was not her mother, probably because of the very stiff and distant behaviour, which caused them to have a lot of disagreements later in their life, after Nelson died. He on the other hand loved little Horatia hugely and it might have been possible that Emma even envied her daughter for getting more attention than herself.

⁵¹ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson's Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 276-277.

Nelson soon preferred the navy to his family again. His duty called him to sail north and strike against the Northern Coalition. He left Emma and Horatia in the Hamilton's house called Merton Place. Old Sir Hamilton did not mind about the household. He was growing old and needed his quiet time. Meanwhile Emma was in her best years, she threw banquets and tried to keep up Merton Place, because Nelson could come home at any time and she did not want him to be disappointed with her, when he comes back. This kind of life was not good for an old man and therefore he soon left the place and rented an apartment in London, where he died early in 1803 accompanied by both his wife and Nelson, leaving Emma in the caring hands of the Admiral. Also this kind of life was financially demanding and Emma basically spent all of Nelson's and William's money on the upkeep of the place and living in comfort.

When Nelson came back after one of his yet victorious battles and also ones not so victorious, Emma was waiting for him. One of the great losses was when they tried to attack a French flotilla in the mouth of Boulogne harbour, but the French were warned in advance and the attack turned into a disaster. After this Nelson was resolved to quit the naval service and live the rest of his life with Emma and Horatia. They spent some of the happiest days of their life and Nelson was determined to end his naval career. Nelson soon bought the place in order to ensure his beloved girls from suffering later on, when he might not be able to take care of them himself. Emma was delighted by the thought of having Nelson home finally and Nelson was also glad to be able to spend time with two of his most precious people in the world.

5. 7. Trafalgar and the consequences

Nevertheless, when Britain called upon his hero once again he did not hesitate to take the chance to add some glory to his already famous name. Emma later liked to claim that it was her, who encouraged the hero to take his final battle and sent him to the sea once again. This statement was probably only yet another fable made up by Emma to heighten her importance in British history. Also the family started to have some financial issues and the money from action would have been of use. After chasing Bonaparte over the Atlantic

and back in order not to let him flee away, Nelson engaged his final battle at Trafalgar. He died after he got shot into his lung and backbone on board of his ship *Victory*, but lived long enough to hear the news about his success. His last thoughts were given to Emma and their daughter. He also wrote a last will including these two women. “Could I have rewarded these services, I would not now call upon my country; but as that has not been in my power, I leave Emma Lady Hamilton, therefore, a legacy to my king and country, that they will give her an ample provision to maintain her rank in life. I also leave to the benefice of my country my adopted daughter, Horatia Nelson Thompson; and I desire she will use in future the name of Nelson only.”⁵²

After the Trafalgar, all the glory went out of Emma’s life. She did not lose only her heart, but also her material and financial advantage. Also Britain lost all the interest in poor Emma, because despite of Nelson’s last wish she was forgotten. Horatio Nelson was buried at St. Paul’s Cathedral and Emma later expressed a wish to be buried by his side, but of course this wish was not granted. After all these troubles she lost Merton Place and when at the beginning of 1810 her mother, Mrs. Cadogan, died, Emma felt disastrously. Horatio’s brother was given all Nelson’s money and Emma, after many years of struggle to get some reward for her role in the history, Emma had to leave Britain and died in Calais in January 1815. “All the best of Emma Hamilton’s life had really died ten years before at Trafalgar, and in the year of Waterloo the flame which had burnt high and brilliantly was extinguished. The span of her life covered the great era of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars... Amid many of these high events, in this scene of the world’s activities, the Mediterranean, Emma Hamilton had played her part and played it well— with courage, with resource, with infinite ardour. She began life as an outcast, and she ended it as one; but between her troubled youth and her desolate death she had crowded a breathless age of living— she had known power and used it; she had lived in hundreds of eyes as the beauty of her time; and she had been the single passion of Nelson’s life.”⁵³

⁵² Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1813) 252.

⁵³ E. Hallam Moorhoure, *Nelson’s Lady Hamilton* (London: Methuen & Co., 1909) 367-368.

6. Conclusion

Her life began in poverty and it also ended in that fashion. Her childhood and early years spent in humble surroundings were severe, but probably raised Emma to her best. When she first came into the environment of higher society, she grabbed everyone's hearts by her warm personality and extraordinarily beautiful looks. When the right men entered her life, it got significantly better and turned up side down.

It was not only her beauty, which distinguished her from other women of that time. It was not very common for a female to be able to witness so many important events of the development of a country. The differentiating factors were her determination and prudence. She had set her goals and did everything that needed to be done to reach them. Other women were simply listening to men's orders; Emma was making them to change the orders. She was active and believed in her skills. It was a fortunate coincidence that Marie Carolina and Emma were alike. Was it not for Emma's friendship to the Queen, her husband Ferdinand would probably lead the country in a very different direction than it actually went. By the strong attachment of the two self-confident women, Ferdinand's influence was very much lowered in his own country. The Queen was basically the one to run the whole political scene.

Despite her outstanding abilities it was not her who personally was directly influencing the political scene. Her importance was therefore never appreciated by England and her public glory wore off as soon as the important men disappeared from her life. In my opinion, Emma Hamilton was more than a pretty face. She was a woman who was able to control men and through men control the world. It is not an exception, when women control powerful men and it affects not only their personal lives, but also politics and country leadership. For me, Emma's influence in this area is unquestionable.

Attachments

Attachment 1: Sir Joshua Reynolds. *The Death of Dido*. Olga's Gallery.

14 April 2011. <<http://www.abcgallery.com/R/reynolds/reynolds213.html>>



Attachment 2: Sir Joshua Reynolds. *Thais*. Olga's Gallery. 14 April 2011.

<<http://www.abcgallery.com/R/reynolds/reynolds219.html>>



Attachment 3: George Romney. *Bacchante*. Museum Syndicate. 14 April 2011.

<<http://www.museumsyndicate.com/item.php?item=27125>>



Attachment 4: George Romney. *Ambadress*. All paintings. 14 April 2011.

<<http://www.allpaintings.org/v/Victorian+Classicism/George+Romney/George+Romney+-+Lady+Hamilton+as+Ambadress.jpg.html>>



Attachment 5: Richard Westall. *Nelson Wounded at Tenerife*. National Maritime Museum. 14 April 2011.

<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/nelson/viewObject.cfm?ID=BHC0498>

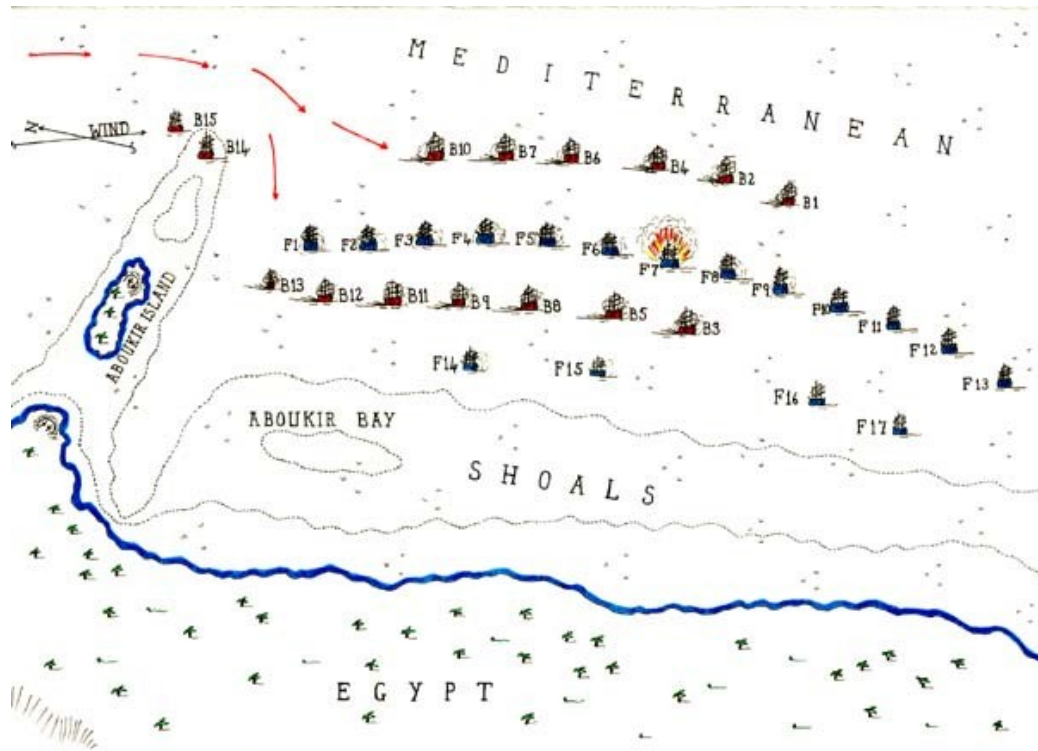


Attachment 6: Lemuel Abbott. *Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson*. National Maritime Museum. 14 April 2011.

<<http://www.nmm.ac.uk/collections/nelson/viewRepro.cfm?reproID=BHC2889&picture=1#content>>



Attachment 7: British battles. *Map of the battle of Nile*. British battles. 14 April 2011. <<http://www.britishbattles.com/waterloo/battle-nile.htm>>



Shrnutí

Lady Hamiltonová se narodila v Nesse v pátek 26. dubna 1765 a zemřela v Calais o 50 let později. Jakožto dcera horníka neprožívala dětství v blahobytu, nýbrž v poměrně nuzných podmínkách. Poté, co její otec zemřel za záhadných okolností se Emma s matkou přestěhovaly do Hawardenu k Emmině babičce Sarah Kidd, která se o ně starala, až dokud se Emma nevydala hledat své štěstí do Londýna. Toto období bylo jedno z mála, kdy byla Emma odloučena od své matky, která ji vždy a ochotně doprovázela v pozdějších letech, a byly si tedy velice blízké.

V Londýně Emma pracovala jako služka a pomocnice. Jejím snem bylo dostat zaměstnání v divadle, což se jí nikdy nepodařilo, avšak její nadání pro dramatické a nadnesené zobrazování skutečností se v jejím pozdějším životě ukázalo jako jedna z jejích největších schopností. V této době bylo velice těžké se vyhnout prostituci v Londýně a jelikož byla tato práce považována za bezpečnější než práce v továrně, ani Emma se jí nevyhnula. Ve svých šestnácti letech byla díky své kráse považována za perlu mezi ostatními dívkami a brzy upoutala pozornost malířů a umělců.

Jejím prvním milencem z vyšší společnosti se stal Sir Harry Fetherstonehangh, který byl rovněž otcem jejího prvního dítěte. Po jejich rozchodu se Emmy ujal mladý Charles Greville, který společně se svým strýcem, Lordem Hamiltonem, obdivoval všechno krásné – jak umění, tak ženy. Charles však potřeboval za nevěstu mladou a hlavně bohatou dědičku, která by mu umožnila vést život na vysoké noze, na nějž byl doposud zvyklý. Proto se pomocí malé lsti zbavil Emmy, která by mu tento plán zajisté překazila.

Emma odjela i se svou matkou do království obojí Sicílie, kde se postupem času stala pobočnicí Lorda Hamiltona. Po určitém nátlaku a vynaloženém úsilí se jí podařilo ho přesvědčit, aby si ji vzal. Svatba se konala v Londýně v září 1791 a po jejich návratu do Neapole byla Emma přijata královnou Marií Karolinou na královském dvoře. Tyto změny v poměrech jí zaručovaly bezstarostný život plný plesů, oslav a jiných společenských událostí.

Situace v Evropě však nebyla bezstarostnému a hýřivému životu nakloněna. Hned po svém návratu z Londýna se Lady Hamiltonová začala cítit

jako důležitá postava v historii tohoto období díky tomu, že předala poslední dopis Marie Antoinetty její sestře Marii Karolině. Emma vždy tíhla k dramatizování a zveličování své role, což se jí v závěru nevyplatilo, protože to ubíralo věrohodnosti jejího vyprávění.

Neapolské království bylo v té době spravováno Marií Karolinou, jejíž manžel Ferdinand se zajímal spíše o lov než o kralování, a jeho žena tedy převzala nadvládu nad celou politickou situací. Po exekuci francouzských feudálů v roce 1793 se Marie začala obávat o svůj trůn a pozici v budoucím rozložení Evropy. Její jedinou nadějí byla pomoc námořních velmocí, což znamenalo, že si Marie velice přála naklonit si celou Anglii, která v té době ještě vládla Středozemnímu moři. Královna udělala z Emmy svou poradkyni, důvěrnici, přítelkyni, ale i důležitý nástroj své vůle. Královna věděla, jak veliký vliv má mladičká žena velvyslance na svého muže a také toho chtěla využít. Emma dlouho věřila, že jejich přátelství je čisté a upřímné. Věřila tomu, až do té doby, dokud nutně nepotřebovala pomoc, když přišla o všechny muže svého života a na sklonku svého bytí se ocitla ve finanční tísní. Marie Karolina se k ní tehdy neznala a dle mého názoru tato nečinnost prokazuje čistě politické důvody tohoto přátelství ze strany Marie.

Emma celý život věřila tomu, že slavné vítězství u mysu svatého Vincenta bylo částečně realizováno její zásluhou. Později se jí díky jejímu vlivu podařilo o tomtéž přesvědčit další vlivné osobnosti. Ferdinand v té době udržoval silný kontakt se svým bratrem Karlem, králem Španělska, se kterým si pravidelně dopisoval. Jelikož ale Marie byla velice silná a chytrá žena, pravidelně svého manžela kontrolovala a jeho korespondenci četla, jako by byla adresována jí samé. Dopis, ve kterém se Karel zmínil o tom, že se chystá zradit koalici, se skrze ruce královny, Emmy a nakonec jejího manžela dostal do rukou osob vlivných dostatečně na to, aby s tímto zvratem Británie počítala a dokázala se na něj dostatečně připravit.

I přesto, že Emma dosáhla toho, po čem vždy toužila, když se její život propletl s osudem britského námořníka jménem Horatio Nelson, znamenalo toto setkání veliké změny v životech obou. Je velice pravděpodobné, že zprvu Marie Emmě přikázala, aby se o mladého Horatia zajímala a zahrnovala ho pozorností a dosáhla tak pevnějšího postavení Itálie v rámci Evropy. Po Nelsonově výhře ve slavné bitvě v zálivu Abú Kir byla však Emmina pozornost přenesena

na Horatia ještě intenzivněji, což naznačuje, že i ona sama se chtěla podílet na vši slávě a rozruchu kolem, což byla vždy Emmina nejvýraznější vlastnost. Byla nesmírně spokojená, když se mohla označovat za hlavní hrdinku a mohla se podílet na vývoji událostí, či je jen zdobit svou krásnou přítomností. V případě bitvy na Nilu se jí ovšem podařilo zazářit. Italské království se za velmi nestálých podmínek před bitvou obávalo otevřeně vyjádřit svou sympatii Anglii podporou jejích lodí. Nelson byl však před bitvou zoufalý a nutně potřeboval doplnit zásoby po dlouhém pronásledování francouzské flotily. Na popud Lady Hamiltonové se královna zhostila role vládcce a vydala tajný příkaz, který opravňoval Nelsona k užívání všech přístavišť v Itálii v potřebné šíři.

Již podruhé se Emma cítila jako vítězka, jelikož již podruhé pomohla své milované vlasti. Po Nelsonově slavném vítězství nabraly události obrátky. Po dlouhých a ohromných oslavách se strhla politická debata o pozici Neapolského království. Je těžké soudit, jak moc byl Nelson ovlivněn názory Lady Hamiltonové, když doporučil královskému dvoru, aby vyhlásil Francii válku co nejdříve, a využil tak momentu překvapení. Když potom dorazil generál Mack se svou rakouskou armádou, celý královský dvůr byl přesvědčen o úspěchu válečného tažení. Úspěch se však nekonal a armáda napůl složená se sedláků se brzy rozprchla. Neapole byla obklíčena francouzskými vojáky a královské rodině nezbylo než uprchnout do Palerma. Nelson se aktivně podílel na tomto útěku a posléze sdílel bydlení i všechnen volný čas s Hamiltonovými.

Emma byla v sedmém nebi, Nelson propadal lásce, což hluboce ovlivňovalo jeho činy a lidé si začali této změny všímat, Lady Nelsonová trpělivě čekala doma na návrat svého muže a Sir Hamilton s příchodem stáří začal uvažovat o návratu do vlasti. Vztah Nelsona s Emmou byl veřejným tajemstvím a většina britských občanů ho odsuzovala.

V Neapoli mezitím vznikla nová Parthenopská republika pod vedením francouzských hodnostářů. Král však v Palermu nezhálel a brzy získal Neapol zpět do svých rukou. Nelson byl vyslán, aby uvedl město do pořádku a vypořádal se s nezbytnými politickými tahanicemi se zbytkem rebelů. Hamiltonovi nemohli u takových významných událostí chybět. Někteří lidé tvrdí, že si Emma užívala pohled na popravy přeběhlíků, dle mého názoru si však užívala pouze to, že mohla být přítomna na všech důležitých setkáních, na

kterých sloužila jako překladatelka, či zapisovatelka. Blízkost Nelsona byla pak druhořadým bonusem vyplývajícím ze situace. Emma také nikdy nezapomínala zdůraznit svou důležitost ve věcech komunikace mezi Nelsonem a Marií Karolínou. Všechny jejich dopisy prošly jejíma rukama. Emminy názory byly vysoce ovlivněny názory její přítelkyně královny a Emma pak ovlivňovala názory zamilovaného Nelsona. Královna se tak skrze prostředníky pomstila všem, kteří ji chtěli připravit o korunu.

Po návratu do Anglie se zářnost Lady Hamiltonové pomalu, ale jistě vytrácela. Po několika konfrontacích s Lady Nelsonovou se milenecký pár ujistil, že chce být spolu a zanedlouho Nelson koupil pro Hamiltonovy sídlo Merton, který Emma spravovala velkolepě a bez omezení po finanční, či emocionální stránce. Lord Hamilton velkoryse přehlížel vztah jeho přátel, avšak kvůli stáří moc dobře nesnášel hýřivý život v Mertonu. Zanedlouho si pronajal byt v Londýně, ve kterém také o pár let později zesnul. Nelson nevydržel dlouho bez námořnictva a po dlouhých výpravách se vracíval domů jen na krátkou dobu. Po narození jejich dcery Horatie se však Nelson rozhodl omezit pobyt mimo domov. Emma nebyla zvyklá na blízkost někoho, kdo by dostával více pozornosti, než ona sama a svým způsobem začala na dceru žárlit a jejich vztah již nikdy nenabral pozitivní směr.

Po Nelsonově smrti v bitvě u Trafalgaru se Emma i s dcerou brzy dostaly do finanční tísně. Přesto, že Nelson na svou rodinu myslel ve své závěti, britská vláda odmítla Emmě vyplatit jakoukoliv odměnu. Emma se snažila poukázat na její přínos při pobytu v Itálii, avšak její tendence ke zveličování událostí snížila kredibilitu jejího vyprávění. Ani Marie Karolina, vždy věrná a oddaná přítelkyně, neměla pro Emmu žádnou útěchu a pomoc v nouzi

Když jsem začala psát o Lady Hamiltonové, měla jsem smíšené pocity. Její role v Neapolském království byla ohromná, avšak její lesk zmatněl jakmile ztratila mocné muže, kteří jí stáli boku. Svůj život začala i skončila v chudobě a bídě. Byli to právě mocní muži, kteří ji dostali do pozice, ve které je potom mohla ovládat a prosazovat svou vůli a tím ovlivňovat životy mnohých. Kdyby se nedobrovolně nestala manželkou Lorda Hamiltona, vývoj válečných událostí v království obojí Sicílie by mohl nabrat zcela jiný směr. Spojením dvou silných žen, Emmy a Marie Karoliny, pak vznikla silná koalice moci a ovlivňování.

Královna byla totiž fakticky hlavou království místo jejího manžela a také si krále držela pevně na uzdě. Pomocí Emmy pak mohla předávat všechny důležité informace do Anglie, ve které viděla největší naději na záchranu království.

Ve světě ovládaném muži je pro ženu velice těžké prosadit své názory. Nejjednodušší způsob pro krásnou a chytrou dívku je ovládat muže, kteří ovládají svět. Jedním z takových mužů byl i Horatio Nelson. Nejdříve získala jeho pozornost získáním tajného nařízení k poskytnutí zásob, poté získala i jeho srdce pořádáním nejrůznějších oslav a festivalů na jeho počest. V pozdějších letech už Nelsona ovlivňovala pouze v rodinných záležitostech. Horatio se totiž nenechal na dlouho odpoutat od námořnictva, což se mu nakonec stalo osudným. Ať už jsou události doložené dobovou korespondencí pravdivé, zveličené, či částečně lživé, význam Emmy Hamiltonové nelze popírat.

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